Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims of the application to read as indicated below.

Claim 1. **[Previously presented]** A separation device (1) for processing biomolecules, especially for isolating nucleic acids, comprising:

a separation column (2) that has a top side inlet (7) and a bottom side outlet (8) and in which a separation material (10) is arranged, and-a collection vessel (3) for collecting the liquid exiting from the outlet (8), wherein the separation column (2) is inserted into the collection vessel (3) and is closed off with a removable cover (4), wherein the interior of the collection vessel (3) and the separation column (2) have a pressure-equalizing connection (11, 12) in addition to the outlet (8) from the separation column (2).

Claim 2. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 1, wherein the collection vessel (3) and the separation column (2) are closed or can be closed air- and or liquid-tight by means of the cover (4).

Claim 3. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 1, wherein the cover (4) is or can be screwed on or positioned on the collection vessel (3).

Claim 4. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 3, wherein the cover (4) is designed to be hat-like and is or can be screwed (6) onto the exterior of the collection vessel (3).

Claim 5. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to one of claim 1, wherein the separation column (2) has an edge flange (5) that is pressed onto the collection vessel (3) by means of the cover (4), forming a seal.

Claim 6. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 5, wherein the edge flange (5) is tip-stretched onto the inlet (7).

Claim 7. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 6, wherein the edge flange (5) lies on the upper edge of the collection vessel (3).

Claim 8. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 5, wherein the edge flange (5) is clamped between the cover (4) and the collection vessel (3).

Claim 9. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 1, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection has a port (12) in the upper region of the separation column (2).

Claim 10. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 1, wherein a pressure-equalizing channel (11) between the separation column (2) and the collection vessel (3) is part of the pressure-equalizing connection.

Claim 11. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 10, wherein the pressure-equalizing channel (10) is constructed as an annular slot (11).

Claim 12. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 1, wherein the volume enclosed by the collection vessel (3) beneath the lower end of the outlet (8) of the separation column (2) is at least 1.5 times as large as the free volume of the separation column (2) beneath the inlet of the pressure-equalizing connection (11, 12) in the interior of the separation column (2).

Claim 13. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 1, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection (11, 12) is disposed apart from the separation material (10).

Claim 14. **[Currently amended]** A separation device for processing biomolecules, especially for isolating nucleic acids, comprising:

a collection vessel having an interior;

a separation column inserted in the collection vessel, the separation column having an interior, a top side inlet, and a bottom side outlet, the bottom side outlet connecting the interiors of the collection vessel and the separation column with one another for delivering liquid exiting through the outlet ~~(8)~~ to the interior of the collection vessel;

a separation material arranged in the separation column;

a removable cover sealing off the top side inlet of the separation column; and

a pressure-equalizing connection connecting the interior of the collection vessel with the interior of the separation column.

Claim 15. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 14, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection comprises a port in the upper region of the separation column, and a channel between the separation column and the collection vessel.

Claim 16. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 14, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection is disposed apart from the separation material.

Claim 17. **[Previously presented]** A separation device for processing biomolecules, especially for isolating nucleic acids, comprising:

a collection vessel having an interior;

a separation column inserted in the collection vessel, the separation column having an interior, a top side inlet with an edge flange, and a bottom side outlet, the bottom side outlet connecting the interiors of the collection vessel and the separation column with one another for delivering liquid exiting through the outlet to the interior of the collection vessel;

a separation material arranged in the separation column;

a removable cover pressing the edge flange onto the collection vessel to seal the interior of the separation column; and

a pressure-equalizing connection connecting the interior of the collection vessel with the interior of the separation column.

Claim 18. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 16, wherein the edge flange lies on the upper edge of the collection vessel, and wherein the edge flange is clamped between the cover and the collection vessel.

Claim 19. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 18, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection comprises a port in the upper region of the separation column, and a channel between the separation column and the collection vessel.

Claim 20. **[Previously presented]** A separation device according to claim 17, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection is disposed apart from the separation material.

Claim 21. **[New]** A separation method, comprising:

providing a separation device comprising

a collection vessel having an interior;

a separation column inserted in the collection vessel, the separation column having an interior, a top side inlet, and a bottom side outlet, the bottom side outlet connecting the interiors of the collection vessel and the separation column with one another for delivering liquid exiting through the outlet to the interior of the collection vessel;

a separation material arranged in the separation column;

a removable cover sealing off the top side inlet of the separation column; and

a pressure-equalizing connection connecting the interior of the collection vessel with the interior of the separation column; and

centrifuging a fluid in the separation device to separate a material from the fluid while permitting the pressure-equalizing connection to equalize pressures between the interiors of the collection vessel and the separation column.

Claim 22. **[New]** A separation method according to claim 21, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection comprises a port in the upper region of the separation column, and a channel between the separation column and the collection vessel.

Claim 23. **[New]** A separation method according to claim 21, wherein the pressure-equalizing connection is disposed apart from the separation material.

Claim 24. **[New]** A separation method according to claim 21, wherein the fluid comprises a bodily liquid, and wherein said centrifuging comprises separating nucleic acids from the bodily liquid.